

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SAM-01 NSC-05 DODE-00 MC-02 /066 W

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R 151407Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5655

INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MADRID

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

CINC USNAVEUR LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 00703

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, PFOR, PO, GW

SUBJECT: US AND NATO COOPERATION WITH PORTUGUESE
MILITARY

REFS: (A) STATE 273963 DTG 191946Z NOV 75

(B) USNATO 7001 DTG 231640Z DEC 75

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BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBOFF RECEIVED A STATUS REPORT ON FRG REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL FOR USCINCEUR COOPERATION WITH THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY AND TO THE PROPOSAL THAT NATO UNDERTAKE A SIMILAR PROGRAM. AS INDICATED IN PREVIOUS EMBASSY REPORTING, THE FRG STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE EFFORTS BY USCINCEUR AND SACEUR IN THESE FIELDS. THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (FMOD) IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A STUDY TO DETERMINE HOW THE FRG MIGHT ASSIST IN BRINGING PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL INTO CLOSER CONTACT WITH THEIR FRG COUNTERPARTS. THE MAIN OBSTACLE IS THE LANGUAGE BARRIER. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JANUARY 14 COL. VON SANDRART OF THE POL/MIL OFFICE AT THE FMOD BRIEFED AN EMBOFF ON FRG REACTION TO THE USCINCEUR AND SACEUR PROPOSALS. HE TOLD US THAT FEDERAL MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEBER WAS INFORMED OF THE CINCEUR INITIATIVE PRIOR TO THE LAST DPC MEETING. THE MINISTER SAID HE WANTED TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER PERSONALLY, A REFLECTION OF THE KEEN INTEREST IN PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS WHICH LEBER HAS LONG EVIDENCED. THE SUBJECT WAS NOT ADDRESSED IN THE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MINISTER LEBER AND SECRETARY RUMSFELD HELD DURING THE DPC MINISTERIAL.

2. AFTER THE US MISSION TO NATO HAD MADE ITS APPROACH TO FRG DEPUTY PERM REP BOSS (REF B), HE WIRED FOR INSTRUCTIONS. ONCE AGAIN MINISTER LEBER SAID HE WISHED TO ADDRESS THE MATTER PERSONALLY. HOWEVER, THE MINISTER THEN WENT ON LEAVE WHERE HE STAYED UNTIL JANUARY 12.

3. MEANWHILE, THE FONOFF WAS ATTEMPTING TO PROD THE FMOD INTO ACTION BECAUSE THE FOREIGN OFFICE WISHED TO RESPOND TO THE US INITIATIVE RAPIDLY AND POSITIVELY. THE REACTION IN THE FMOD WAS, AND IS, ALSO POSITIVE. THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THE LANGUAGE BARRIER: FEW MEMBERS OF THE FRG MILITARY SPEAK PORTUGUESE AND EVEN FEWER OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY OF THE GRADE LEVELS NATO WISHES TO INFLUENCE SPEAK GERMAN. TENTATIVE FMOD THINKING IS THAT A PROGRAM

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INVOLVING THE AIR FORCE WOULD PROBABLY BE MOST
PRODUCTIVE. SINCE ENGLISH IS THE INTERNATIONAL
LANGUAGE OF AVIATION, AIR FORCE OFFICERS AND NCO'S
OF THE FRG AND PORTUGAL SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE
IN THAT LANGUAGE. VON SANDRART NOTED THAT A COOP-

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ERATIVE PROGRAM OF THE KIND ENVISAGED TENDED TO BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE IF THOSE INVITED WERE UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE EASILY WITH THEIR HOSTS. A HOSTILE REACTION WAS OFTEN STIMULATED BY LEFT-WING EXTREMISTS WHO CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY FEELING OF BEING AT LOOSE ENDS, ABANDONMENT, OR SHEER BOREDOM RESULTING FROM THE INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE.

4. VON SANDRART WENT ON TO BUTTRESS HIS CLAIM THAT THE FMOD WAS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN SUCH A PROGRAM. HE REFERRED TO THE VISIT WHICH MINISTER LEBER HAD PAID TO PORTUGAL AND TO THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY WHO HAD VISITED THE FRG AT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY'S INVITATION. (IN AN ASIDE, VON SANDRART WRYLY REMARKED THAT MOST OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO HAD VISITED THE FRG WERE NOW OUT OF A JOB). ONE FRUIT OF THESE VISITS WAS FRG AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER SIX G-91 FIGHTER BOMBERS TO THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. THIS ADMITTEDLY MODEST BEGINNING ALSO INVOLVED TRAINING FOR THE PILOTS AND MECHANICS WHO WOULD BE FLYING AND MAINTAINING THESE AIRCRAFT. AGREEMENT TO UNDERTAKE THIS PROGRAM WAS REACHED EARLY IN NOVEMBER OF 1975 WHEN VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY CAME TO BONN TO TALK ABOUT JOINT USE OF THE BEJA AIR FIELD WHICH THE FRG'S AIR FORCE CONTROLS IN PORTUGAL.

5. VON SANDRART CONCLUDED HIS BRIEFING BY NOTING THAT MINISTER LEBER WAS BACK AT HIS DESK AND WOULD PRESUMABLY BE ADDRESSING THE ISSUE SOON. HOWEVER, THE FORTHCOMING NPG MEETING WAS HOLDING HIS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. IN RESPONSE TO CONTINUED PRODDING FROM THE FONOFF, THE FMOD HAS TOLD THE FOREIGN OFFICE TO INSTRUCT THE FRG'S PERM REP TO TELL THE NATO COUNCIL THAT THE FRG AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE PROPOSAL AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING HOW IT MIGHT IMPLEMENT THIS DECISION. HILLENBRAND

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